

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claim 21 has been objected to due to informalities.

Claims 1-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by International Publication No. WO 98/32412 to Besselink ("Besselink").

Applicants' Response

A. In the Specification

Paragraph [0041] has been amended to correct a typographical error.

B. In the Claims

Independent claim 1 and 21 have been amended to recite, among others, that "two second segments are disposed between every two first segments and coupled directly to one another." Support for this recitation can be found, e.g. at FIGS. 7 and 8B.

Additionally, claim 11 has been amended to correct a typographical error, claim 19 has been amended to provide dependency from claim 1 after the cancellation of claim 18, and claim 21 also has been amended to correct the informalities listed in the Office Action.

Amended claims 1 and 21, and all the claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record at least for the following reasons.

Besselink discloses a tubular device formed by a plurality of cells, each including a rigid segment and a flexible segment that are coupled at the proximal and distal


ends. Each cell is connected to the neighboring cell by connecting the rigid segment of one cell with the flexible segment of the neighboring cell. *Besselink*, Figs. 5B and 9.

Contrary to that, Applicants disclose a tubular device formed by a plurality of cells, each of which includes a rigid segment and a flexible segment, wherein two flexible segments are disposed between two first segments and coupled to one another. *Applicants' Specification*, paragraph [0053]; FIGS. 7-9. This type of construction is not described, either expressly or inherently, in *Besselink*.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the claimed invention is not anticipated by the prior art of record, and respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-28 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.
Dated: November 9, 2006 Respectfully submitted,



Franco A. Serafini
Reg. No. 52,207
Attorney for Applicant

LUCE, FORWARD,
HAMILTON & SCRIPPS, LLP
11988 El Camino Real, Suite 200
San Diego, California 92130
Tel: (858) 720-6320
Fax: (858) 523-4326